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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken in response to the need for research on alternative teaching and learning approaches in higher education. It focused on the experiences of 14 adult learners in a nontraditional classroom environment, as perceived by the learners themselves and by outside observers. The study also focused on a particular mode of classroom discourse, itself a promising new form of teaching and learning. It is about dialogue, a way that students and teachers can think together. Ethnographic and phenomenological techniques and outside observer ratings (from four graduate students) were used to collect and analyze data. Themes derived from interview results, field notes, and frequency counts based on observer's ratings described participants' experiences with dialogue in a course designed to help participants' experience with three types of teaching and learning, and outside observers rated participants' use of selected types of questions. The results are consistent with studies in the area of dialogue and collaborative learning. Themes that stood out for special discussion included: (1) the role of strong interpersonal relationships in creating and sustaining dialogue; (2) the critical factor of time to learn, practice, and develop dialogue skills; (3) differences in how dialogue is understood; and (4) the relationship of the dialogue process to three types of learning and teaching. Six appendixes contain study questions and definitions. (Contains 21 references.) (Author/SLD)

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STUDYING DIALOGUE AS A MODE OF DISCOURSE IN A COURSE ON DIALOGUE

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken in response to the need for research on alternative teaching and learning approaches in higher education. It focused on the experience of adult learners in a nontraditional classroom environment, as perceived by the learners themselves and by outside observers. The study also focused on a particular mode of classroom discourse, itself a promising new form of teaching and learning. It is about dialogue, a way that students and teachers can think together.

Ethnographic and phenomenological techniques and outside observer ratings were used to collect and analyze data. Themes derived from interview results, field notes, and frequency counts based on observers' ratings described participants' experiences with dialogue in a course designed to help participants develop their dialogue skills. These same sources of data also were used to describe participants' experience with three types of teaching and learning, and outside observers rated participants' use of selected types of questions.

The results were consistent with related studies in the area of dialogue and collaborative learning. Themes that stood out for special discussion included the role of strong interpersonal relationships in creating and sustaining dialogue; the critical factor of time to learn, practice, and develop dialogue skills; differences in how dialogue is understood; and the relationship of the dialogue process to three types of learning and teaching.

Conceptual Framework

Isaacs (1999) argued that our social institutions, like the cultures they represent, are inherently fragmented and lack a holistic view of the worlds they serve. He proposed that members of social institutions learn to think together in order to resist fragmentation and develop a growth-enhancing systems perspective. For Isaacs, learning to think together means learning to *dialogue*.

Other writers join Isaacs in advocating dialogue as a means to improve institutional well-being. For example, Ellinor and Gerard (1998) claimed that "dialogue is a powerful communications practice that transforms those who engage in it" (p. 3). Clark et al. (1996) encouraged "dialogue as a means for achieving parity in collaboration while facilitating mutual reflection, growth, and change" (p. 228). These views of dialogue are similar to Buber's well-known "I-Thou" stance. As cited by Clark (1991), this is

> A stance that transforms communicating people into coequal collaborators who cooperate in the process of negotiating meanings they can truly share, meanings that do not embody the dominance of one (but) enable people to develop a shared understanding of their common experience in an interaction that becomes more than the sum of its individual participants because the shared knowledge that emerges from it cannot be reduced to what each one of them separately knows. (p. 3)

Dialogue from another perspective "is about shared inquiry, a way of thinking and reflecting together. It is not something you do *to* another person, it is something you do *with* people" (Isaacs, 1999, p. 9). Dialogue from Isaac's perspective is about learning. It is a process of learning to understand self and the other. Thus, dialogue can produce "an environment where people are consciously participating in the creation of shared meaning" (Isaacs, 1993, p. 26).

Isaacs' (1993) model of dialogue is divided into four phases. In phase one, conflict and defensiveness are the norm; however, group members begin to realize they can listen to others and suspend judgment. In phase two, group members begin to explore the underlying pattern of thought that supports and feeds the different views. This is a time of frustration

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and disorientation, and there is a tendency for extreme views to be defended. In the third phase, members begin a process of inquiry in which thinking, speaking, and respect for the facts and opinions of others take on new meaning. As members participate, they begin to realize and see the underlying themes in their thinking and how their thinking is limited. In the last phase, group members create different levels of thought and meaning. Although they still may not all agree, group members are free from the rigid patterns that previously limited them and now are able to seek new levels of creativity and intelligence. At times, words may not fully convey what members are attempting to communicate and silence ensues. In this stage, a richness in meaning is created; and the group propels itself to a different dimension of learning, creating, and understanding.

Mezirow (1991) and Shotter (1992), have similar theories concerning the dialogue process. Mezirow described three types of learning: instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory. He believed that instrumental learning could only be validated through empirical methods while the other two types of learning rely upon the relationship among learners and the ability of individuals to think critically and reflectively. Understanding through dialogic communication is the key. Mezirow (1991) pointed out that "dialogue or communicative action allows us to relate to the world around us; to other people; and to our own intentions, feelings, and desires" (p. 65).

The purpose of communicative learning is to establish relationships in which meaning can be jointly constructed. Mezirow (1991) stated that the most significant learning in adulthood falls within this category of learning because it "involves understanding, describing, and explaining intentions; values; ideals; moral issues; social, political, philosophical, psychological, or educational concepts; feelings; and reasons" (p. 75). For Mezirow, these attributes of learning are important because they are all shaped by culture, social norms, speech, and expectations.

While Mezirow indicated the importance of communicative action, Parrott (1992), a social constructivist, stated that the individual's "sense of self is not something that is preestablished or self-contained. Rather, it is constructed from social relationships and institutions that are historically and culturally contingent" (p. 212). Shotter (1992) postulated that the individual creates the self through "socially shared identities of feelings they themselves create or construct" (p. 181). It is this construction with others that produces common places, moments, or shared mental models. This construction is also grounded in language that is more than talking or communication. It is that, but it is also grounded in the sharing and understanding of feelings that creates an identity for the individual as the interaction between people progresses. This is similar to the concept of relational responsibility offered by McNamee and Gergen (1999), in which "meaningful language is generated within processes of relationship" (p. xi). From this perspective, learning is understood as occurring in the process of human interaction.

In the interest of examining the dialogue process as it relates to the focus of this study, it is important to know how meaning is constructed in relationships, particularly in formal teaching and learning settings. This is the focus of works by Peters and Armstrong (1998), who have identified three types of teaching and learning used in educational environments. Type I, "Teaching by Transmission, Learning by Reception," is the predominant mode of teaching and learning. In this situation, information is transmitted from the teacher to the student. In Type II, "Teaching by Transmission, Learning by Sharing," the flow of information still emanates from the teacher but can flow from student to student as well. In Type III, "Collaborative Learning," the teacher becomes a member of the group, thereby relinquishing the role of principal source of information and its transmission to students. This stands in contrast with Types I and II where the teacher is the primary source of information and manager of the learning environment.

The types of teaching and learning developed by Peters and Armstrong (1998) provide an additional framework for understanding the role that dialogue plays in learning. In

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Type III, dialogue is the principal mode of discourse that learners use to construct new meaning, and this discourse is usually not used in the other two types of teaching and learning (Peters & Armstrong, 1998). Dialogue is thus a central component of collaborative learning, as it helps learners achieve parity in their relationships with one another and with a teacher.

This study addressed the need for additional research on dialogue in teaching and learning environments. A graduate course that focused on dialogue and utilized the process of dialogue as its principal mode of discourse was chosen as the setting for this study. The following questions guided the inquiry:

1. How do students who engage in dialogue experience the process?
2. What types of questions do students use while engaged in dialogue?
3. What types of teaching and learning are experienced by students who are engaged in dialogue?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The 14 participants were members of a graduate class from a major state university located in the southeastern part of the United States. The course entitled Dialogue was designed as a highly participatory experience in that the course objective for participants was to learn about dialogue, primarily through practice. This class met during a spring mini-term for nine sessions over a three-week period, each session lasting approximately 4 hours and 45 minutes. The following demographic information describes the participants:

- 14 participants
- 9 women — 5 men
- 2 master's students — 12 doctoral students
- 3 part-time students — 11 full-time students
- 4 employed part-time — 10 employed full-time

Data Collection

This was a single case study utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research procedures. Ethnographic observations, personal interviews, and observer ratings were used for data collection.

Ethnographic Observation

Ethnographic observation ranges on a continuum from mostly observation to complete participation. My role was that of observer, note taker, and manager of the audio equipment. Approximately 45 minutes before each class began, the table and chairs were configured in a octagonal design and the audio equipment was placed in such a way that all participants could be clearly recorded. Throughout each class session, I sat in the corner of the room observing the group, taking notes, and maintaining the audio equipment.

Personal Interviews

Once the dialogue course ended, a personal interview was conducted concerning each participant's experience in the course. This interview consisted of both a phenomenological question and a series of semistructured questions (Appendix A). In the phenomenological segment of the interview, each interviewee was asked, "What was your experience in the dialogue course?" This broadly stated question was an attempt to elicit their experience without attempting to direct them in anyway. The interview was scheduled in a neutral location at a convenient time for the participant. When the interviewee arrived, I greeted him or her and explained the process, the types of questions that were going to be asked, and approximately how long it was going to take. Throughout each interview, I

paraphrased, used silence, and utilized open-ended questions to follow up on what had been said.

Once both interviews were concluded, many indicated this was a positive experience that provided some closure. Others said it was an opportunity to reflect on what they had been thinking since the class ended or an opportunity to think about and analyze what occurred so they could take their thinking one step further. Each interview lasted from 55 to 90 minutes and all interviews were audiotape recorded and later transcribed by a professional transcriptionist.

Observers

Four graduate students from the Department of Educational Psychology who had completed the course Reflective Practice in Education and Psychology were selected as observers. Three of the students participated in this project as partial credit for a behavioral modification course in which they were enrolled, and the fourth graduate student volunteered. It was felt that those who had completed this course understood the fundamentals of dialogue and collaborative learning.

Two observers using a rating form (Appendix B) rated the audiotapes for dialogue phase, key practices, and teaching and learning type; and two observers using a similar rating form (Appendix C) rated the audiotapes for question types. While each team of observers listened for different elements within the process, both teams heard the same recordings.

In order to determine which dialogue phases and key practices the course participants experienced, operational definitions were created for use by the observers. Two observers assisted me in defining the operational definitions for each dialogue phase and key practice (Appendix D). In addition to our personal experience in a dialogue group, Isaacs' (1993) model and description of dialogue was the primary source for operationalizing these definitions. Teaching and learning types (Appendix E) were operationally defined based on Peters and Armstrong (1998) description of Types I, II, and III of teaching and learning.

To provide a framework to operationally define the question types (Appendix F), I reviewed the literature and specific information from the Teaching and Learning Center University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2000) and Peters (1995). A list of six question types and their operational definition was created.

Since observers were used to rate the audiotapes, agreement between both observers on each team was important because

> Assessment is useful only when it can be achieved with some consistency, assessing agreement is important because it minimizes or circumvents the biases of any individual observer, and assessing agreement is important because agreement reflects whether the target behavior is well defined. (Kazdin, 1994, p. 91)

Observers listened to and rated segments of the taped sessions that were not used as data for the study. This continued until each team agreed a minimum of 80% of the time. During this time, actual rater agreement fluctuated between 85% and 95%. Estimating observer agreement was determined by "dividing the smaller frequency by the larger frequency and multiplying by 100" (Kazdin, p. 93).

For ease of rating, the last hour of each class session (excluding the debriefing session) was divided into 12 five-minute episodes with five seconds of silence between episodes. This was an attempt to ensure each team of observers was able to rate the same episode within each class session. Observers rated a total of 9 hours of audiotape or 108 five-minute episodes. The minimum agreement attained among observers for the 9 class sessions was 89.8%.

While there were three data sources to answer the research questions, they came from four data sets. Those four sets of data are (a) observer-rated audiotapes, (b) ethnographic field notes, (c) participant responses to a phenomenological question, and (d) participant responses to semistructured questions.

Data Analysis

Observers

Frequency counts were used to assess each rater's observations. Frequency counts were selected for (a) ease of scoring, (b) ability to reflect any changes that occurred during observation, and (c) ability to show how much of the defined behavior was actually being performed (Kazdin, 1994).

Observers, while listening to each episode, recorded a hash mark for each observation of the target behavior. The target behaviors included the identification of the types of questions asked by group members, the dialogue phases experienced by the group, the key practices utilized by the group, and the types of teaching and learning experienced and practiced by the group in each of the 108 five-minute episodes.

Thematic Analysis

When data collection was complete, the phenomenological interviews were separated from the semistructured interviews. The interview transcripts were reread and then a thematic analysis was performed on these two data sets. Information was coded as described by LeCompte and Schensul (1999).

LeCompte and Schensul (1999) saw coding data on a continuum from the general to the more specific:

> Coding simply means organizing data in terms of a framework the ethnographers can use to support the results and conclusions they reach at the end of their study. At a more specific level, coding can mean actually reading through interviews, field notes, and transcripts and assigning to sentences or paragraphs of text numerical or alphabetic codes representing concepts, categories, or themes. (p. 45)

During the second reading of the transcripts, major themes were created and similar ideas, concepts, and statements were put together. These ideas, concepts, and statements were placed on separate sheets of paper and coded to identify the source, thus, creating general categories of themes. Once that was completed, a thematic analysis of the field notes was begun, using the same process.

Personal Bias Statement

In reporting findings in a research project such as this, it is important to understand and acknowledge personal biases. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) believed that "what you see and report as findings depends on who you are and how you see the world. Findings do not exist independently of the consciousness of the observer. All observations are filtered through the researcher's selective lens" (p. 160).

Bias statements are an attempt to get everything out or lay out the researcher's perspectives, values, and attitudes in the open. For Van Manen (1990),

> It is better to make explicit our understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories. We try to come to terms with our assumptions, not in order to forget them again, but rather to hold them deliberately at bay and even to turn this knowledge against

> itself, as it were, thereby exposing its shallow or concealing character. (p. 47)

In order to expose assumptions, values, expectations, and attitudes, I submitted to a bracketing interview. This interview was audiotape recorded and later transcribed. I was questioned concerning my understanding of the dialogue process, the class I observed, and any expectations I had concerning this topic.

The results of the bracketing interview identified an assumption or attitude that I hadn't previously recognized. I had entered this study with an interpretist perspective; however, the interview indicated that my experience and, consequently, my assumptions and attitudes of what occurred or what I thought was to occur was actually positivistic in nature. The bracketing interview helped me to identify an inconsistency in my behavior, attitudes, and expectations. While I wanted this group to dialogue and learn by doing, I still had an expectation of how that was to be accomplished.

I reviewed the transcripts of my bracketing interview prior to and during the data analysis phase of this study. Reading the transcripts of the bracketing interview helped to ensure that my interpretation of the data was not an extension of my own biases but, rather, supported by the data from the personal interviews, field notes, rater observations, and class audiorecordings.

FINDINGS

Research Question One

The first research question was: *"How do students who engage in dialogue experience the process?"*

Phenomenological Interview Results

The phenomenological question stated as "What was your experience in the dialogue course?" was the first question posed to each group member in the personal interviews. Thematic analysis of the phenomenological interviews revealed six themes. These were (a) personal relationship, (b) respect, (c) frustration, (d) involvement, (e) empowerment, and, (f) heightened awareness. Additional themes that emerged from the field notes and semistructured interview questions were (a) attendance, (b) time, (c) verbal participation, and (d) roles and responsibilities. Themes are summarized and paired for discussion purposes.

Personal relationship and respect. All participants stated that the group dialogued during the nine class sessions. During those periods when the group experienced dialogue, participants described a special atmosphere in which there was a connection, feeling, an energy, and a sense of being in balance with others in the group.

Participants experienced dialogue as a dynamic process. Dialogue was personal and not something they had experienced in other courses. Participants said this experience was about developing personal and interpersonal relationships and respecting one another. They reported that personal relationships between group members should be formed so that an opportunity for learning occurs. Participants also stated that group members need to respect each other in dialogue and that it is important to hear what others are saying, even if the topic of discussion is contrary to their own beliefs.

Frustration and involvement. Participants cited experiences that hindered their involvement, among these were, periods of frustration, their perceived inability to dialogue, and their lack of experience with the process. They also said that what occurred prior to each meeting affected their level of involvement in the discourse. Several participants cited a level of excitement in the first class session that soon turned to frustration, a feeling of incompetence, and concern that their expectations would not be realized.

Empowerment and heightened awareness. This group also experienced an inability to empower itself. While group members created goals and discussed what they wanted to learn from this course, they had difficulty in creating a leaning environment in which they could realize their goals. Additionally, while participants were polite to one another, they did not explore assumptions or inquire into the statements made by group members.

However, participants said they had a heightened awareness of certain conditions that must be met for dialogue to occur. They learned that a group needs to develop a dialogical space and its members need to develop the prerequisite skills and attitudes, such as the willingness to suspend other judgments, listen, respect the others, and work in an environment of trust.

Attendance and time. The attendance theme indicated group membership was constantly in a state of flux due to absences and participants arriving late and leaving early. In examining the attendance and tardiness of participants, an issue could be whether the group ever formed a relationship necessary for the creation of common meanings. Because each class session varied in number and composition of participants and participants in the group had various levels of exposure to one another, relationship building within the group may have been limited.

Time was another theme in participants' experiences. Group members said the time frame needed for a group to engage in dialogue needs to last from a few months to a year in length, although each meeting should not last beyond three hours. This is in contrast to the time limitations placed upon them in a three-week spring mini-term. Within the three weeks the group met nine times with each meeting lasting 4 hours and 45 minutes.

Verbal participation. The verbal participation theme refers to differences in the average number of verbalizations between group members. Participants varied in terms of the number of times they spoke in class. Participants who spoke more frequently and asked fewer questions were those with the least amount of preparation, suggesting they were the least prepared to engage in dialogue.

Roles and responsibilities. Many participants identified their role within the group as that of a listener. It was their responsibility to hear what others were saying, even if what was said countered their own beliefs. Participants also cited the importance and influence of the course facilitator. They discussed how they reacted to messages they received from the facilitator and how his power in the group affected their interaction. They said that while the facilitator attempted to assume the role of a group member, his presence as a teacher was felt throughout the course. My field notes also indicated that the group continually forced the course facilitator to maintain the role of a traditional facilitator. Participants did this by focusing their questions on the facilitator instead of directing questions to other group members.

Rater Observations

A pair of external observers rated 108 episodes of participant behavior and rated the episodes in terms of the incidence of Isaacs' phases of dialogue. The results of their rating indicated that the group primarily stayed in phase one with a few exceptions in which movement into phase two occurred. The raters observed that the group did not attain Isaacs' third or fourth dialogic phase in any of the 108 episodes. Additionally, the raters observed that the key practices of listening and voicing occurred, while suspending and respecting were not practiced by the group.

Comparing Rater and Participant Observations

Participants said they engaged in dialogue, but raters observed that participants did not dialogue, at least in terms of Isaacs' model. The difference in these findings may be attributed to how raters and participants understood the dialogue process.

The definitions cited in participant interviews are definitions used by authors such as Bohm (1996a), who said dialogue shouldn't have an agenda, and from Shotter (1993), Anderson (1997), and Gergen (1994), who said that dialogue is a communication process in which individuals are open, involved, and responsive to others. Additionally, during the mini-term course, participants never attempted to create a single definition of dialogue because participants never discussed various definitions in the course. They were, therefore, free to choose their own definitions and express the dialogue process as they understood it. This stands in contrast to the perspective of the raters. The raters evaluated participants' behaviors in terms of a specific, operational definition of Isaacs' four phases of dialogue. Raters and participants appear to have employed different criteria in their assessment of dialogue behaviors.

The way participants and raters were asked to account for dialogue behaviors may have contributed to the difference in observations between participants and raters. Participants were asked in an open phenomenological question to describe their overall experiences in the dialogue course and then asked a series of semistructured questions. Participants were not asked to analyze specific segments of the course or class sessions. However, raters observed the last hour of a sample of class sessions, or approximately 21% of the course and each class session. Additionally, the last hour of each session was divided into 12 five-minute episodes for raters to identify which characteristics of Isaacs' phases of dialogue were occurring in each episode. It is possible that participants' overall view of their course experience, coupled with their more general understanding of the dialogue process, helped account for the difference in results. The way in which raters decided which dialogue phase was dominant may have affected the qualitative aspects of their results.

In each episode, characteristics from multiple phases could have been observed; however, the phase with the most observed characteristics was determined by the raters to be the dominant phase in a particular episode. Raters informally reported that some episodes included evidence of more than one phase—including phases two and three, but their formal task was to select the phase with the highest number of descriptors. Thus, while raters chose only the dominant dialogue phase in a particular episode, other phases may have occurred but were not reported as such. This observation is consistent with Isaacs' claim that more than one dialogue phase can occur in the same moment in time and that the phases tend to enfold onto one another. It is also possible that participants' own accounts of dialogue were influenced by their sense of these additional phases of dialogue; one participant referred to experiencing "pockets of dialogue" over the nine class sessions.

While participants and raters appear to have based their assessments on different criteria, their accounts are similar in terms of several important features of the dialogue process. Raters identified phase one as the dominant dialogue phase engaged in by participants, followed by lesser engagement in phase two.

Research Question Two

The second research question was: *"What type of questions do students use while engaged in dialogue?"*

Rater Observation

Observers rated the group in the use of six question types and found that closed-ended and factual questions were the dominant questions asked throughout the course. Even though open-ended questions were used by group members, this question type accounted for less than 17% of the total questions asked. Closed-ended questions were asked twice as frequently as factual questions and three times more often than open-ended questions.

The dominant use of closed-ended and factual questions is consistent with Isaacs' (1993) dialogue phases one and two. However, since group members stated that dialogue

occurred in small pockets throughout the course, this may support the raters' observations of the small percentage of open-ended questions. Depending on the definition of dialogue each participant was using, the groups use of open-ended questions may have coincided with the pockets of dialogue reported by participants but not rated as dominant in any of the 108 episodes.

Research Question Three

The third research question was: *"What type of teaching and learning is experienced by students engaged in dialogue?"*

Participant Experience

Data collected from the personal interviews showed group members felt a mixture of teaching and learning types occurred throughout the nine class sessions. Participants said all three teaching and learning types were present and that the group flowed in and out of each type over the course of the three-week term. Movement among the teaching and learning types was dynamic and changed with the needs of the group. Participants stated that Type III teaching and learning occasionally occurred throughout the course, which is consistent with their experience that dialogue was also present in small pockets throughout the nine sessions.

Rater Observation

Raters observed Type II teaching and learning was dominant in 80% of the episodes, and Type I was dominant in 18% of all episodes. They observed that Type III was not dominant in any of the episodes, although it was observed in minor occurrences.

Comparing Rater and Participant Observations

The raters' observations of types of teaching and learning are consistent with their observations of the dominant phases of dialogue. Raters identified dialogue phase one occurring in 91% of the episodes and phase two in 9% of the episodes. Dialogue is assumed to be central to the teaching-learning process involved in Type III (Peters & Armstrong, 1998). While participants can dialogue without engaging in the fullest features of Type III, they would not be able to engage in Type III without also engaging in dialogue. It is arguable that participants would need to be operating in dialogue phases three and four of Isaacs' (1993) model if they were also engaged in Type III teaching and learning. Although these two models are not synonymous, they do share some of the same features of discourse and participant involvement (e.g., participants should suspend assumptions, ask open-ended questions, build relationships through trust and respect, and involve themselves in the process through active verbal engagement). Armstrong's (1999) study showed that, while participants in a similar course environment engaged in Isaacs' dialogue phases three and four, they also experienced Type III teaching and learning. This would also suggest a correlation between the last two phases of Isaacs' model and Type III teaching and learning.

In this study, participants and raters differed in their observation of the occurrence of Type III teaching and learning. This may be accounted for in part by their attention or inattention to precise definitions of types of teaching and learning. Participants were working from a general understanding of the types, based on previous experiences. On the other hand, raters were using operational definitions. It is also possible that participants experienced aspects of Type III, although Type III did not dominate their class sessions. Type III teaching and learning places emphasis on the role of the group as well as individual learning. However, raters based their observations on verbalizations made by individuals during selected episodes. It is possible that participants had a better sense of the group by being present in it and therefore based their recall of Type III experiences on their sense of the group as a whole.

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CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has shown that the experience of participants in a course on dialogue can be described in terms of elements that capture individual and group behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. However, the study revealed that participants hold to a variety of views regarding the nature of dialogue, and their views are not fully consistent with at least one published model of the dialogue process, i.e., (Isaacs, 1999).

If participants' self-reports of their experiences in the course are accepted, they experienced dialogue. If outside observers' ratings are accepted, the participants did not experience dialogue. However, if a choice of viewpoints must be made, the choice must also be qualified by choosing a definition of dialogue. In this study, participants freely chose their own definition of dialogue; and, by their definition, they were engaged in the process. Raters, however, followed a particular definition of dialogue that participants may or may not have followed; and, on that definition, raters concluded that dialogue did not happen.

In search of a possible third choice, it is probable that participants were at the beginning stages of the Isaacs model of dialogue. This is reinforced by several of the themes in the participants' responses to interview questions (e.g., their experience of frustration).

Whether or not participants were in the early stages of dialogue according to Isaacs' model or they dialogued in terms of other views of dialogue, they did express the need for more time to fully develop their dialogical skills. This finding is also consistent with the results of other related studies (e.g., Tisue, 1999), and it suggests that persons who would facilitate dialogue in groups ought to be heedful of the role of time in participants' skill development. Put simply, learning the process takes time; how much time is a relative matter, but the results of this study strongly suggests that a three-week time frame is not long enough. Other factors surely interact with the time factor (e.g., the prior experience of participants with the process), but it is not to be neglected as a vital element in the process.

Another theme that stood out among the 13 identified in this study is the role of relationships in the dialogue process. Groups need to form and members of groups that seek to practice dialogue need to identify with one another in a trusting, respectful, and open manner.

In this study, there were interesting parallels in how raters and participants assessed the incidence of Type III teaching and learning. Participants not only claimed that they engaged in dialogue, they also claimed they experienced Type III learning. Raters who observed that participants did not engage in dialogue also observed that participants did not engage in Type III learning. This could be a coincident set of reports, but the relationship between Type III learning and dialogue is further supported by the theories of Isaacs (1993) and Peters and Armstrong (1998). There are similarities in terms Isaacs used to describe his fourth phase of dialogue and the terms that Peters and Armstrong used to describe their Type III teaching and learning. However, there are differences in the two models as well, and these differences remain unexplored.

In a related matter, this study examined the role that questions play in dialogue. The findings suggest that certain types of questions (open-ended questions and probes) are functional in developing and sustaining dialogue and that closed-ended and factual questions are more closely associated with the beginning stages of dialogue. These results are consistent with related studies, and they suggest to facilitators of groups engaged in dialogue that careful attention be paid to the types of questions asked. Based on this study and the related literature, it seems clear that participants who are inexperienced in dialogue will need to learn how to ask dialogue-enhancing questions and practice asking them if dialogue is to be sustained over long periods of time.

This study undertook to examine participants' experiences with dialogue, questions, and types of teaching and learning by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. This combination of research approaches lent richness to the study, as the methods promised to represent different views of the realities of participant experiences. While not

exactly a matter of triangulating the observations reported in the study, each view provided a unique perspective on the same phenomenon. From most accounts, the two viewpoints described the same participant experience, notwithstanding the interesting differences in the terms in which dialogue was understood. Among the lessons learned from this study is the need to establish common definitions and terms on which observers (insiders and outsiders) are asked to report their observations. In this study, if participants had been asked to assess their own experience with dialogue in terms of Isaacs' model, the differences in participants' and outside raters' observations might disappear. This approach would be an interesting follow-up to the present study.

The researcher also asked raters to assess participant experiences with question types but did not ask participants to assess their own experience with questions. This was an oversight that ought to be corrected in future studies that might follow this line of inquiry. In general, such studies that employ multiple perspectives on the same phenomenon ought to establish the same benchmark criteria for the purpose of comparing research results.

The study described was undertaken in order to contribute to our understanding of dialogue, especially as it might be a principal form of discourse in formal teaching and learning situations. Whether or not the study met this challenge is now a matter of the reader's judgment.

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Appendix A
Personal Interview Questions

I. Phenomenological question
   1. Please describe your experience in the dialogue course.

II. Directed questions
   1. What is your definition of dialogue?
   2. Did your definition of dialogue change from the beginning to the end of the course? If yes, describe the change.
   3. Did group members dialogue within the nine sessions?
      a. If yes, describe the experience as you witnessed it.
      b. If no, what accounted for the lack of dialogue?
      c. If no, describe the type of discourse that occurred.
   4. Did you develop or further develop skills of dialogue?
      a. If yes, what skills were developed?
      b. If no, what inhibited you from developing those skills?

In the next few questions, I will be asking you to characterize or describe your experience as it relates to the beginning, middle, and end of the course.

   5. In terms of Type I, II, and III learning, how would you characterize the type of learning that took place in the beginning, middle, and end of the course?
   6. How would you describe the group dynamics in the beginning, middle, and end of the course?
   7. How would you characterize the facilitator's role in the beginning, middle, and end of the course?
   8. How would you characterize your role in the beginning, middle, and end of the course?
   9. How would you describe the attitude of the group in the beginning, middle, and end of the course?
   10. What is the most important thing you learned from this course?
   11. Were your expectations met in the course?
      a. If yes, describe how they were met.
      b. If no, describe what inhibited you from satisfying those expectations.

Appendix B

Interobserver Agreement Form

Phases, Key Practices, and Teaching and Learning Types

Session # _____

Episode	1	2	3	4	5	6
Phase I						
1. Advice giving						
2. Agenda setting						
3. Closed-ended questions/statements						
4. Defensiveness						
5. Fragmentation						
6. Leader dependency						
Total						
Phase II						
1. Reflection of group process						
2. Frustration/confusion						
3. Open-ended inquiry						
4. Role differentiation						
5. Suspension of assumptions						
Total						
Phase III						
1. Collective awareness						
2. Conversational flow						
3. Connected inquiry						
4. Learner interdependency						
Total						
Phase IV						
1. Immediate/constructive awareness						
2. Silent conversation						
3. Simultaneous inquiry						
Total						
Key Practices						
1. Listening						
2. Suspending						
3. Respecting						
4. Voicing						
Teaching and Learning						
1. Type I						
2. Type II						
3. Type III						

Session # _____

Episode	7	8	9	10	11	12
Phase I						
1. Advice giving						
2. Agenda setting						
3. Closed-ended questions/statements						
4. Defensiveness						
5. Fragmentation						
6. Leader dependency						
Total						
Phase II						
1. Reflection of group process						
2. Frustration/confusion						
3. Open-ended inquiry						
4. Role differentiation						
5. Suspension of assumptions						
Total						
Phase III						
1. Collective awareness						
2. Conversational flow						
3. Connected inquiry						
4. Learner interdependency						
Total						
Phase IV						
1. Immediate/constructive awareness						
2. Silent conversation						
3. Simultaneous inquiry						
Total						
Key Practices						
1. Listening						
2. Suspending						
3. Respecting						
4. Voicing						
Teaching and Learning						
1. Type I						
2. Type II						
3. Type III						

Appendix C
Interobserver Agreement Form
Question Types

Session # _____

Episode	1	2	3	4	5	6
Question types						
Closed-ended						
Complex						
Factual						
Leading						
Open-ended						
Rhetorical						
Total per episode						

Session # _____

Episode	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Question types							
Closed-ended							
Complex							
Factual							
Leading							
Open-ended							
Rhetorical							
Total per episode							

Appendix D

Dialogue Phase Definitions

Phase I:

1. Advice giving
   a. Giving own viewpoint or perspective through statements, questions, or stories.
      Example: "I think you..." "You should..." "When I was..."
   b. Advice subtly embedded in directed questions.
      Example: "What do you think would happen if you...?"

2. Agenda setting
   a. It is very procedural.
      Example: "What are we going to do tonight?" "What are we doing?"
   b. It is reporting on previous group meetings.
   c. It is monopolizing — a limited number of individuals control the direction of the conversation.

3. Closed-ended questions/statements
   a. Leading or directed questions.
   b. Responding only to the parts of what is being said.
   c. Making imperative statements that defend/state a point of view.

4. Defense of personal viewpoints
   a. No awareness of the values, beliefs, and perceptions of others.
      Example: Ignoring statements or making stereotypical statements.
   b. Talking as if there is only one objective truth (T). Example: "Everyone knows that..."
   c. Statements that could lead to defensiveness and conflict.
      Example: "I don't want to talk about this anymore" or back and forth contradictory statements.
   d. Use of experts in support of position.

5. Fragmentation
   a. Responding to only the parts of what someone is saying.
   b. Repeatedly moving off topic.
   c. Popcorning - back and forth conversation (group members are competing to be heard).

6. Leader dependency
   a. Group forces traditional teacher and group-member roles.
      Example: Teacher is addressed as the expert.
   b. Teacher is primary facilitator.
   c. Traditional teacher and student role as being the expert and receiver of knowledge.
      Example: Lecturing.
      Example: Group members directing questions to the teacher.

Phase II:

1. Reflection of group process
   a. Group decides to analyze what has been going on.
      Example: "Stop the music."
   b. Bring forth observations that things have changed.
   c. Perception that the climate or atmosphere of the room is changing.

2. Frustration or confusion
   a. Asking questions trying to know or understand where the group is heading because of persistent confusion.
   b. Beginning to acknowledge multiple points of view.

c. Members grappling with old behaviors and new ways of interacting.

3. Open-ended inquiry
   a. Asking open-ended, probing, and affective questions.
   b. Gives invitation to hear other views.
      Example: "What do you mean by that?" "Tell me what you're thinking."
   c. Expresses individual doubts and asking if others doubt.
      Example: "What do you think?"

4. Role differentiation
   a. Teacher begins to assume group-member roles.
   b. Group members begin to assume facilitator role.
   c. Interaction is more like a conversation.

5. Suspension of assumptions
   a. Statements or questions that acknowledge others' viewpoints.
      Example: "Now that I hear you talk about...."
   b. Asking questions that indicate interest in other viewpoints.
   c. Statements that question one's long-held beliefs.
   d. Inviting inquiry into one's own assumptions.

Phase III:

1. Collective awareness
   a. Statements and questions that vocalize beliefs, values, and perspectives as products of individual and group experiences (making assumptions explicit).
   b. Group members make verbal statements in which they are analyzing their impact on the group and the group's impact on them.
      Example: "I have been thinking about how we are all affecting one another and ..."
   c. Probing, open-ended, and affective questions are used extensively.
   d. Members are willing to share and discuss intimate thoughts and feelings and developing thoughts and feelings.
      Example: Individual is emotional, but group members do not take it personally and attempt to probe into issue if relevant to the theme.
   e. Group members become sensitive to how the conversation is affecting all participants.

2. Conversational flow
   a. Conversation slows down.
   b. Responses are not as automatic.
   c. Pauses between statements and conversation becomes more apparent.
   d. Silence becomes more frequent and is not interrupted.

3. Connected inquiry
   a. The group explores the same theme together.
   b. A more thoughtful process where probing, affective, and open-ended questions are the norm.

4. Learner interdependency
   a. The role of facilitator is accepted by all members.
   b. The initial group facilitator assumes the role of group member most of the time.
   c. All members assume role of expert, and no one looks to any one person as the expert.

Phase IV:

1. Immediate or constructive awareness
   a. Members express frustration that words are now inadequate.

b. Members construct new experiences, thoughts, and themes within the group.
c. Members are talking in the "here and now."
d. There are no roles.

2. Silent conversation
   a. Many periods of silence.

3. Simultaneous inquiry
   a. Questions are associated to the "here and now" that includes the new experiences, thoughts, and themes within the group.

Key Practices Definitions

1. Listening
   a. Asking questions for further clarification.
   b. Including what was previously said within a response or statement.
   c. Seeing or making a connection between statements.

2. Suspending
   a. When there is a change in perspective through conversation, going from A to B.
      Example: "When you were talking about.....I now see it...."

3. Respecting
   a. There is no arguing or defense of personal views but an acceptance of different views.
   b. Further questioning or inquiry into what is being said.

4. Voicing
   a. A statement that reflects personal beliefs and values concerning the topic at hand.

Appendix E

Teaching and Learning Definitions

1. Type I
   a. There are traditional teacher and group-member roles.
   b. Teacher is primary source of knowledge.
   c. Student is receiver of teacher's knowledge.

2. Type II
   a. Teacher is primary source of knowledge.
   b. Student is receiver of knowledge.
   c. Student can be source of knowledge.

3. Type III
   a. The focus is on knowledge construction.
   b. Knowledge is not predetermined.
   c. All members are sources of knowledge.

Appendix F
Question Type Categories
Definitions

Question
An attempt to elicit a response through inquiry.

Closed-ended
Elicits a yes/no or limited response.
Example: "Do you like grapes?" "Isn't it a beautiful day?"

Complex
Not easy to understand or requires more than one answer.
Example: "Does illumination of this building need to occur before occupancy can take place?" Ask instead, " Do the lights need to be turned on when entering the building?" Asking two questions in one sentence is just as complex. "Where is the car parked and how much did the new tires cost?" this should be separated into two questions. "Where is the car parked?" and "How much did the new tires cost?"

Factual
Using who, what, where, when, why and how to gain specific information.
Example: "What did you say?" "Who said...?" "Where is the...?" "When did...?" "Why are those children...?" "How did they respond to...?"

Leading
Suggests the desired answer.
Example: "Did you see...?" "Wasn't he...?" "Didn't you say...?"

Open-ended
Encourages discussion.
Example: "Tell me more about...?" "Please say more about...?" "Do you have examples of...?" "What did that feel like when...?" "Can you describe a little more about what happened when...?"

Rhetorical
Makes a point but expects no answer.
Example: "What's wrong with the world today?" "Are we so blind we can't see the obvious?" "Do two wrongs make a right?"

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